





Everett Hemenway  
P



## DIRECTIONS.

---

The position of the body, hand, and arm, and the manner of holding the pen, are matters of the first importance to the pupil, and his attention cannot be too earnestly called to it. In the first place the body must be in an upright position, and directly fronting the desk, without coming in contact with it. If an awkward

position of the hand is to be avoided, from *necessity*, let us at least, for *decency's* sake, be equally careful to guard against a clownish attitude of the body. To stand at the desk in a careless, lounging position, or to sit with both elbows spread apart, and the body bent forward so as to bring the chin near the surface of the table, are postures so censurable, and at the same time so discouraging to a teacher, that no excuse but ignorance or bad breeding should be accepted for indulging in them. They are habits most unpleasant to the observer, and in every respect injurious to the writer. Neither should we sit with the right or left side to the table, but have it directly before us, with both sides of the body equally distant from the edge. We would say to any one who,



CORRECT POSITION.



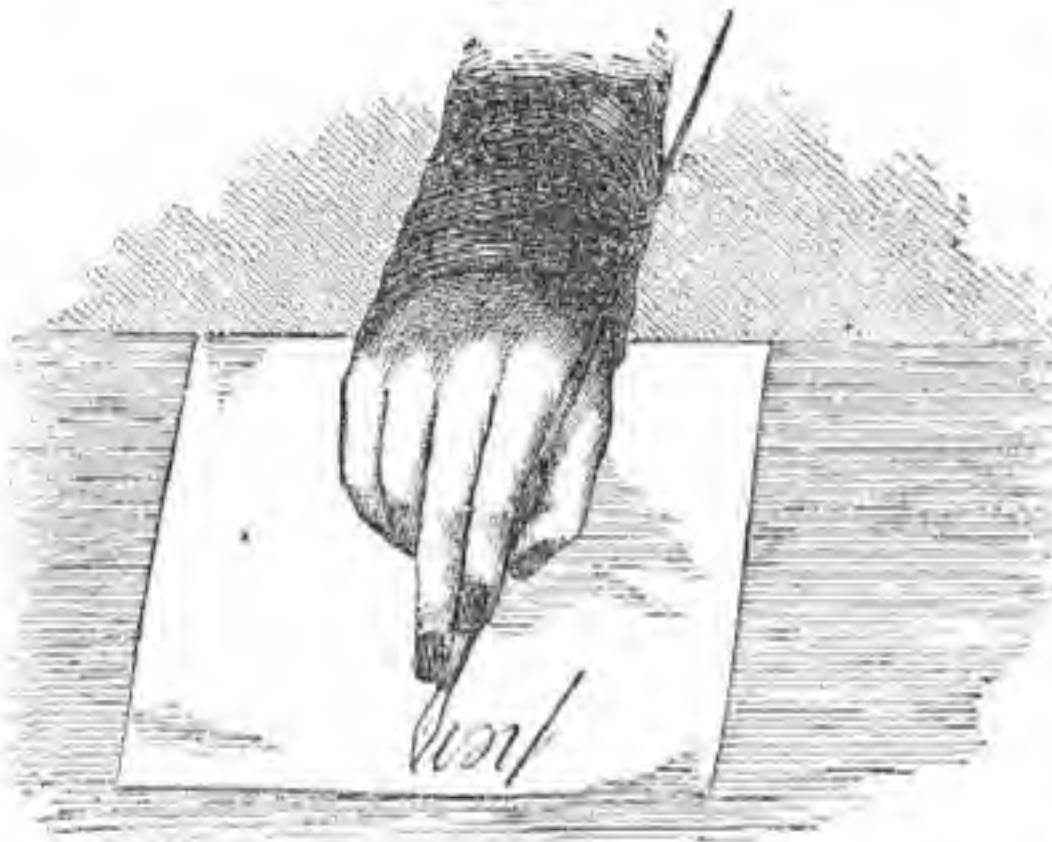
FALSE POSITION.

through carelessness or mere speculative instruction, has fallen into any of these ungainly and useless habits, that every consideration, both of prudence and propriety, demands that he should at once abandon them.



We recommend the use of standing rather than sitting desks, for the reason that business writing is principally done at standing desks, and a sitting position habitually practised is more injurious to the health; but the position of the body, hand, and arm must be the same in either case.

No. 1.



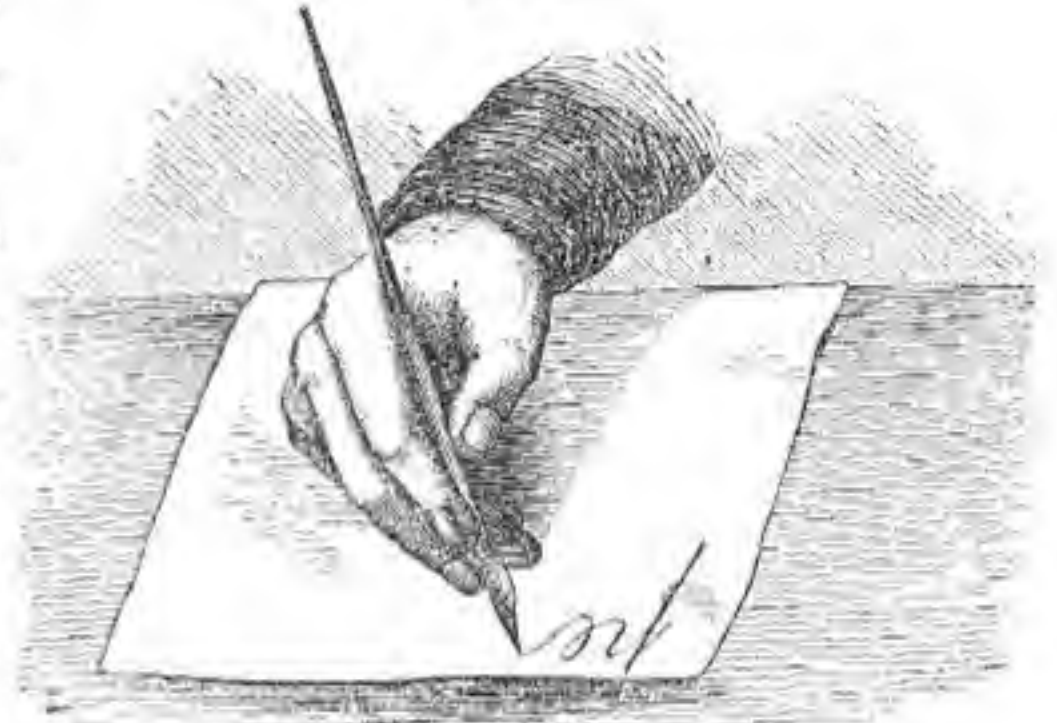
CORRECT POSITION.

We emphatically condemn the use of fine pens for commercial writing. The aversion to a finical effeminate hand among business men, is of itself enough to make it unpopular, but aside from that, the labor of writing is greatly increased if we use a pen so fine as to require any pressure upon the point to produce an upward stroke; and legibility, the chief desideratum in chirography, is to a great extent, if not entirely, sacrificed by the use of a sharp-pointed pen.

Besides, if a person becomes once accustomed to using a fine pen, it is almost impossible for him to write with any other, at least in a manner satisfactory to himself. Select and use such a pen as will give a clear, well-defined upward mark, without any pressure of the fingers, unless very fine writing is required, when a fine pen is most suitable.

The position of the hand is the next thing to be considered, and is of so much importance, that the student will make but little progress unless he gives proper attention to it. The object to be kept constantly in view is to have such a position as will give the greatest despatch with the least fatigue, and to this end a *natural* one must be sought and strictly adhered to.

No. 2.

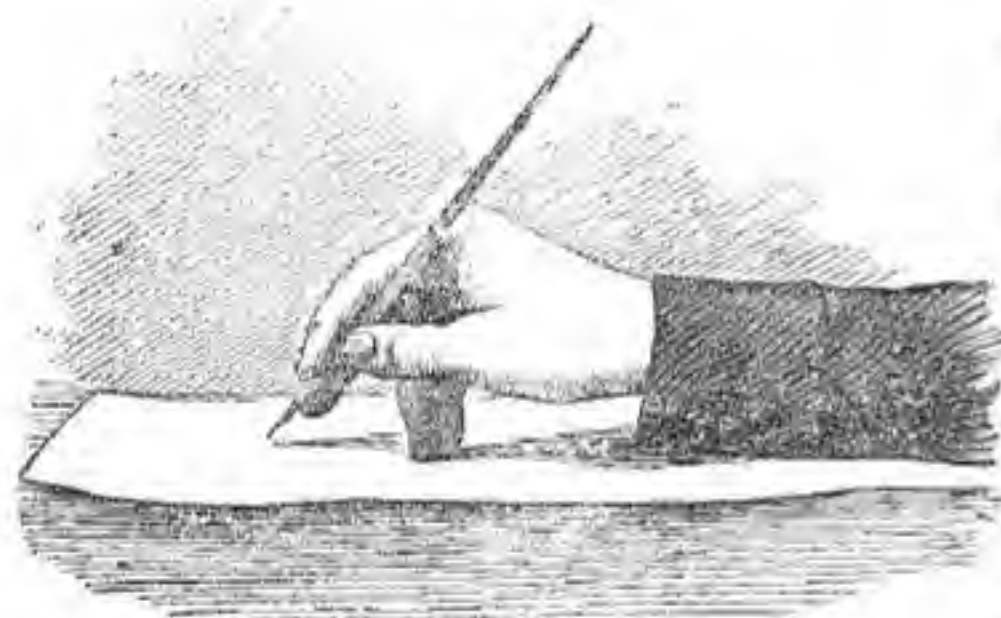


FALSE POSITION.



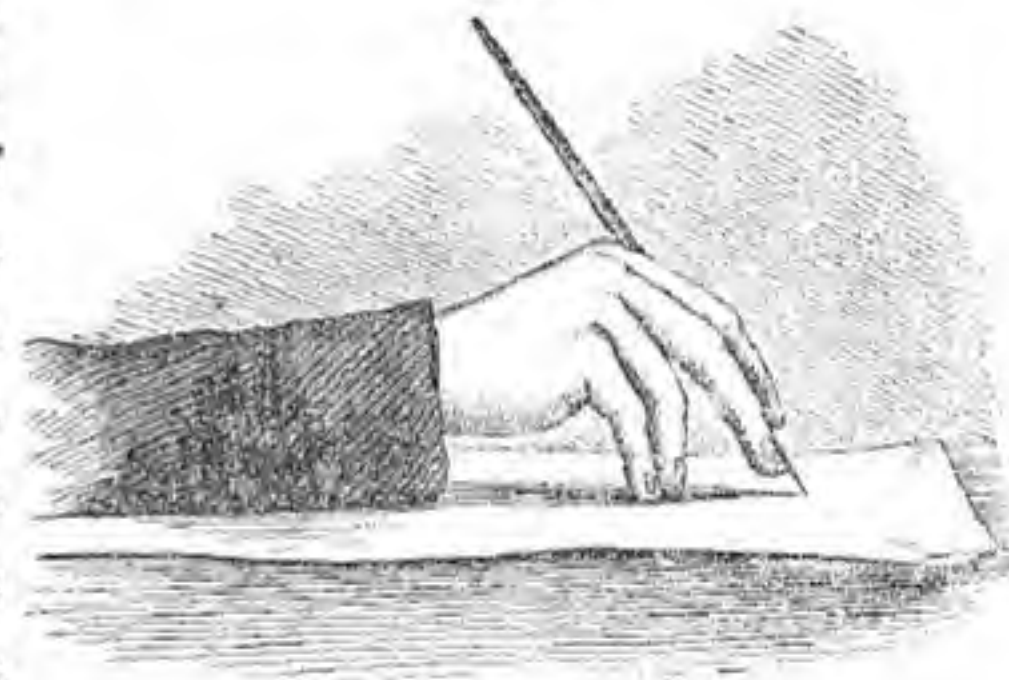
The right arm should rest on the desk at a point as near midway between the wrist and the elbow as convenient, *with the elbow below the edge of the desk*. A teacher always finds it necessary to reiterate this last precept more frequently than any other, because the hand has its share of the work to perform, and if the elbow is on a level with the desk, the wrist becomes depressed, and as soon as it touches the paper the motion of the hand ceases, the work all devolves upon the fingers, and a cramped, unsteady hand, is the certain result.

No. 3.



The knuckles of the hand should be held nearly in a horizontal position, so that both points of the pen may rest with equal weight upon the surface of the paper (see Cut No. 1), and thus produce marks clear and smooth upon the edges. It is very important to observe that, when the pen is properly held, the point is slanted a little in advance of the end of the thumb, by which means the pen is *pushed* across the paper, instead of

No. 4.



being *dragged* along, as it is very often improperly done (see Cuts Nos. 1 and 2). The point of the pen should be about three-fourths of an inch from the end of the second finger, and let the holder cross the first finger about midway between the second and third joint (see Cut No. 3), and instead of holding the fingers and thumb at full length and straight against the holder of the pen, let them all be bent a little, the fingers sufficiently to show some space between them and the holder, and the thumb enough to bring the end opposite the first joint of the first finger (see Cut No. 3). The third and fourth fingers should be drawn backwards far enough to bring a little more than the tips of the nails upon the paper, without allowing them to support any of the weight of



the hand; but merely for the purpose of steadying it (see Cut No. 4). The pen should only be held tight enough to keep it from dropping from the fingers, except in making very large letters, or heavy marks, when quite a firm grasp becomes necessary.

If the pupil is at any time at a loss to decide whether his hand is in the correct position, let him attempt to pick up any small article from the desk (the arm being rested as above described), and in almost every case the hand will be brought into the proper position. We have known this simple experiment to be completely successful, when all other illustrations have failed.

The fingers of the left hand should rest upon the paper to steady it, but no weight of the body is to rest upon the arm, which should not be raised so far up as to bring the elbow upon the table.

The paper must be placed upon the desk so that the lower edge may be parallel with the edge of the desk, and so far to the right that the arm shall be at right angles with the lower edge. This will enable us to slope the writing uniformly, and to write straight without ruling, which every one should learn to do.

After placing the hand and paper in a proper position, the student should commence by drawing the horizontal lines from left to right. (See Plate 1, Exercise 1.) This must be done with a motion of the hand exclusively, sliding the pen easily along on the ends of the third and fourth fingers, and without any more pressure upon the paper than enough to feel that the pen touches it. As the hand moves along, be careful to keep the pen pointing in the same direction, and not let the hand roll over, as it moves along towards the right. It is this light sliding motion that gives currency to the writing, and, next to the proper position, is of more importance to the student than any one thing that can be taught him in regard to penmanship.

This exercise must be practised until the proper position of the hand can be maintained without much effort, and until the ability to move it easily across the paper is thoroughly acquired. Always observe that the pen must not be raised in writing a word.

The student may next take Ex. 2, Pl. 1, which must be written by moving the hand between each of the



letters, and forming the o with a slight motion of the fingers. If he finds it difficult to write as many letters as are given in the copy without raising the pen, he should go back to Ex. 1, and practice that until he can.

Ex. 3 must be written in the same way, that is, the sliding motion of the hand and the movement of the fingers must be combined, the hand must form only the connecting lines, while the letters are made with the fingers. Care must be taken in practising this exercise, not to make a turn at the bottom of the downward stroke, as almost every one is apt to do, but let the turns be made at the top only, so as to make a clear distinction between the form of the m and u. If, after writing a few lines, the strokes still curve at the bottom, turn Ex. 5 upside down, and practice from that as it appears when inverted, and in a little time the difficulty will be overcome.

The time to be devoted to any exercise, or copy, must be regulated by the student's own judgment in the absence of a teacher, always, however, adhering to the rule, to practice one thing until tolerable improvement is made before taking up another. In writing the exercises on Plates 1 and 2 for the first time, perhaps one page of an ordinary letter sheet to *each* exercise, or three pages to each line, would be most advisable; although the pupil must not forget that the process must be many times repeated before he can become proficient.

After Ex. 3 has been thoroughly practised, Ex's 4 and 5 may next be written, and although care should be taken to have the spacing uniform, the slope regular, and the height the same throughout as nearly as convenient, yet at first these matters are all less important than the proper position of the hand and pen.

In writing Ex. 6, be careful to carry the connecting line well to the right, make a small dot, and bring the pen back to the left, and outside of the dot.

In Ex. 7, the r must be made without a very abrupt crook at the top, or it will look like a badly formed 7.

In Ex. 8, make the s without drawing the pen back any in the upward or connecting mark, so as to make the top very sharp and connect with the next letter, by bringing the pen a little below the line instead of making a loop and joining to the next with a horizontal stroke.



The w in Ex. 9 is easily made, and, after learning Ex. 4 thoroughly, will need but little additional attention.

Ex's 10 and 11 will require a great deal of practice, from the difficulty every one finds in connecting them properly with the preceding letter when they occur in a word. Careless writers make a loop in the first part of these letters, and leave the first and second parts a little open, so as to make them look like ei or et, or else lift the pen, and thus disconnect the letter entirely from the preceding one. Both these errors can be avoided by carrying the connecting mark well over to the right (slightly curving it), and then drawing the pen directly back in the same stroke, sufficiently far to make a good connection. Another important thing to be noticed in these letters, as well as in the g and q, is that the first part must not be circular throughout, like an o, but is made nearly straight on the right-hand side. These four letters are among the most difficult in the whole alphabet, and must be practised accordingly.

In Ex. 12, the pen should be raised after forming the first part, and then join the second part to it by a separate stroke. This is a more complete x than the cross in Ex. 17, but is not so readily made.

The looped letters, illustrations of which are given in Ex's 13, 14, 15, and 17, and in Plate 2, must be made wholly with a motion of the fingers, the hand having nothing to do but to make connecting lines.

In regard to the relative proportion in height between the long and short letters, much has been said and written, but practically it all amounts to nothing. There are no arbitrary rules about it, and none can be given. If one thinks that the looped letters should be six times the length of the short ones, and another decides that four times the length is a better proportion, let each make them according to his individual taste. It is more agreeable to the eye, as a general thing, if the loops are of a medium length, but they should be full and clear, and the same letters on the same page of an even height, as nearly as practicable. It may be useful to the learner, however, to say, that the g, j, q, y, and z, should be of a uniform length below the line, the p about half, and the f two-thirds of the same length, while of the long letters above the line, the b, f, h, k, and l are of a uniform height, the t about half, and the p and d two-thirds of the same height. See Plate 3, last line.



The pupil is advised to proceed with the remaining copies in Pl's 1 and 2, taking them in regular order, and being particular to follow the general directions heretofore given. He should practice from Pl. 2 daily, writing two or three lines of each of the exercises. Particular attention must be given to sloping all the letters in the same direction. Learners generally find more difficulty in this than in any other thing. A great diversity in the slopes of a handwriting, otherwise acceptable, will impart to it a blemish which all its other good qualities cannot conceal. Its ill effects are more apparent in a mass of writing than in a few lines or even a page, where the same words are repeatedly written, and for this reason much attention should be given to copying from dictation, or from a book.

After the student has practised from Pl. 2 long enough to get good control of his pen, and to combine the movements of his hand and fingers readily, he may copy a page of each line in Pl. 3, which will give practice in all the small letters of the alphabet, and show the manner of joining each letter to the next one following.

### ***CAPITALS.***

We now proceed to the examination and practice of the Capitals. Capital letters, properly formed, add greatly to the beauty of writing, but they need much careful study and practice; first to get the correct idea of the form of the letters, and next to get such complete command of the pen and fingers, as will enable the pupil to shape the letters according to his idea. The first of these requisites may be acquired in a comparatively short time, the second will demand all the energy and persistent practice which the pupil is capable of exercising, in order to attain the desired result. To make a line or two, or even a page of capitals, will amount to but little; instead of that, the pupil must not confine himself merely to writing over any given space, or making any given number of letters, but must keep diligently at work on one letter, or one *part* of a letter, until he can make a fair imitation of the copy. A single letter may sometimes require hours of practice to get



it even into a tolerable shape. And here the question naturally suggests itself, and which is often asked of us, namely, "How long will it take to learn to write a good hand?" To say how long a time would be required to bring any one person's handwriting to a definite degree of perfection, is quite impossible; but in answer to the question, this much may at least be said, that an efficient teacher may instruct an intelligent and industrious pupil in from one week to one month, upon every essential point relating to plain penmanship, so thoroughly, that all which remains to be done, *after* that time, the student must do for himself. About six hours' study daily would be needed, however, to accomplish so much. Thereafter, sufficient attention must be devoted to it to give the writing a practised and business-like character, which varies with different individuals.

In practising the capitals\* from Plates 4 and 5, general directions only can be given, unless the pupil is under the immediate supervision of a teacher. Let them be made with a motion of the fingers alone. Be sure that they are not too large in proportion to the small letters. This is a very common and disagreeable fault. The capitals in the copy are in the proportion of five spaces in height to one, compared with the small letters. There should not be any greater difference than this between them, but there may be less, without materially injuring the general appearance of the writing.

All the capitals have more or less curves, and these must be made regular in form without abrupt turns or angles.

Every capital requires that some part of it should be shaded, and let the principal mark also be the shaded mark. We can see no propriety in making the same mark heavy in one letter and light in another, or in putting all the ink in that part of the letter which is of the least consequence. It is an invariable rule that all up-strokes, or strokes from the body, are light or fine, while all down-strokes, or strokes towards the body, are heavier or shaded, in more or less degree as the size and style of letter requires. In the Italian style this rule is reversed.

\* While the student is writing the small letters in the words on Pl's 4 and 5, he must keep constantly in mind the directions which are given on p. 12.



The shaded lines must be made as smooth upon the edges as possible, which can only be done by an equal pressure on both points of the pen.

The line of beauty, as it is sometimes called (see the downward stroke of the F and T), is the principal line in a majority of the capitals, and is so difficult to make correctly, that it must practised much by itself. It is a good plan for the student to take a dry pen and devote five or ten minutes at a time to drawing it over any letter, or part of a letter, which he finds it particularly difficult to make. This course will give him a good idea of the form in the shortest possible time.

Those who are obliged to write very rapidly, often find it necessary to adopt a style of capitals of the simplest form, rejecting all superfluous marks, and retaining only enough to show plainly what the letter is designed to be. The second form of the capitals, A, B, C, D, F, H, K, M, N, P, R, S, and T, P's 4 and 5, are of this class.

The errors which unpractised writers perpetrate in forming the capitals are almost numberless, and therefore cannot be anticipated and guarded against in a printed treatise, beyond a certain extent. Some of these general faults have been noticed on p, but a few of those which are likely to occur, in each letter, are pointed out below.

Let the pupil write a set of capitals (either with the copy before him or not), and the first attempt, in nine cases out of ten, will show the following mistakes:

The curve at the foot of the A is not full enough, the top is too pointed, and the last stroke does not increase gradually in thickness till it reaches the line.

The line of beauty in the B stops too short at the bottom. The same fault will appear in every letter where this line is to be made. The top of the B is too large on the right-hand side of the line of beauty for the bottom.

The C is not full enough on the outside, and the shading is too near the line.



The upward stroke on the right of the D is too far from the main part, and the circle on the left is too small.

The top of the E is too large for the bottom, the lower part is not full enough, and the shading is too near the line.

The main stroke of the F is shaded too high up, and the top line is placed too far to the left.

The G is not full enough, the shading is too low, and the last part is drawn back in the connecting line instead of separating the two parts, as in the copy.

The H is too high for the width, and the last part has the same faults as the C.

The top of the I is too pointed, and the foot is not carried far enough to the left.

The top loop of the J is too near the line, and the thickest part of the shading in the lower part is near the centre of the letter, instead of being in the centre of the loop.

The shading in the first part of the K is too high, and the last part, instead of starting above the centre of the line of beauty, leaves it at a point too low down.

The first mark in the L and the loop are not full enough, and the lower part crosses the line of beauty too soon.

The M is too pointed, the upward and downward strokes being united for some distance, instead of being separated quite to the top. The last part has the same faults as the C.

The first and second strokes of the N run together for some distance, like the M, and the second part, instead of being straight like the A, should be slightly bent as in the copy.

The shading of the O, like the C and G, is too low down, and the line must have a true curve throughout.

The P will have the same fault as the B, so far as the similarity in the two letters extends. The turn for the top of the P should be a full and true curve, like the copy, instead of being formed in part of nearly straight lines, as is too often the case.



# PENMANSHIP MADE EASY,

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS.

ADDUCED FROM TWENTY-THREE YEARS' EXPERIENCE IN SUCCESSFUL TEACHING.

BY

GEORGE N. COMER AND OLIVER E. LINTON,

OF

Comer's Commercial College, Boston.

ESPECIALLY ADAPTED FOR SCHOOLS AND SELF-INSTRUCTION.

BOSTON:

PRINTED BY, GEORGE C. RAND & AVERY, No. 3 CORNHILL.

1864.



The Q is too full on the principal stroke, which should curve but little after the turn at the top is made. The lower part has the same fault as the L.

The R will require the same correction as the B and P, and the shading of the last part should be in the centre of the crook, instead of being either at the top or bottom.

The S is too straight, and the shaded part is too near the top. Shade it only after crossing the hair-line,

The T has the same faults as the F.

The turns at the top and bottom of the U are too sharp, and the shading of the first part, instead of being in the centre, is in the curve, either at the top or bottom. The second part, instead of being shorter than the first, should be of the same height.

The second form of the V is the more common, and will have the same faults as the U.

The W spreads apart too much at the top; the bottom part should be a little the widest. The thickest part of the shaded stroke, instead of being in the centre, is too near the bottom.

The X is too wide at the top; it should be very narrow in proportion to the bottom. There is also too much fulness on both of the downward strokes.

The Y will have the same faults as the U and V, and the last stroke should be separated from the first the same as in the G.

The second form of the Z is the best, and is usually made too upright and without going up from the line again after touching it, and so producing a good full loop for the last part; and the loop is almost invariably shaded too high up, instead of in the centre.

As soon as the student can avoid the errors enumerated above, and can make all the curves true and the lines smooth and clear on the edges, he will have acquired all that is necessary, excepting what is gained by practice alone, to give him a good style of capitals.



*FIGURES.*

It is highly essential that more attention should be given to making good figures. These, to a business man, are quite as important as handsomely formed letters, and we would advise every one who studies to improve his handwriting, to devote at least one hour in six to making figures. They should be of a uniform height above the line, excepting the 6, which, by being a little higher than the rest, is not so likely to be mistaken for a cipher. The 7 and 9 should always be brought below the line. Let the spaces between the figures be uniform, and the slopes precisely alike, and they always look much better if made pretty close together. Great care should also be taken, to place them directly under each other when they are written in columns.

*FLOURISHED CAPITALS (See Plate 6),*

When they are skilfully and tastefully made, are much more ornamental than those which are formed with a movement of the fingers only. These are made entirely with a motion of the arm, the third and fourth fingers being allowed to touch lightly on the paper, and thus serve as a sliding support for the hand. The joints of the thumb and fingers, as well as the joint of the wrist, have scarcely any motion at all, as the necessary movements proceed entirely from the shoulder and elbow, and if the wrist and fingers are allowed to move independently of the arm, they serve to make the curves irregular, and all the strokes uncertain. We have found, by actual experiment, that persons with an artificial hand and wrist may learn to make capitals very well in this way, so long as the shoulder and elbow joints are uninjured. The pen should be held a little more firmly than it would be for small writing, and it is of the first consequence that it should move with a uniform velocity throughout all parts of the letter. Beginners always commence to make capitals of this kind with a slow and hesitating movement, and when they arrive at the turn or near the final part of the letter, give it a



sudden jerk, and so destroy the regularity of the curve, or make it of a size quite different from what was intended, and never bring it exactly to the line as it should be, except by accident. Another important thing to be noticed, as well by more practised writers as by beginners, is to avoid an excess of flourishes. True and graceful curves, harmonious proportions in the various parts of each letter, with the shaded strokes perfectly smooth on the edges, and properly placed, are the requisites in handsome capitals. A mass of unmeaning flourishes any school-boy may learn to make in an hour, and the more of them there are in the capitals the more childish the letters look. It is also a very common thing to make flourished capitals much too large for the rest of the writing, for the reason that the arm can swing so that the hand shall describe a circle an inch and a half in diameter much easier than one half an inch across. If the student will practice making the capitals the same size as those in the plate, as nearly as he can, he will be sure to get them large enough, except for coarse hand. He is also earnestly advised not to introduce flourished capitals into writing, that is to be seen by any one but himself and his teacher, until he can make them properly. A beginner is apt to think, that because he has advanced far enough, to attempt to make capitals with an "off-hand" motion, and because it seems to be something new and attractive to himself, that the letters will appear beautiful to everybody else, and that all who chance to see his writing must be impressed with his wonderful proficiency and skill; but instead of that, he only betrays his inexperience and uncultivated taste, for to a practised eye, capitals struck by an unpractised hand, seem to be the most hideous of all caricatures. Better adhere to a style of letters which can be made with some certainty, and are readily recognized, than to attempt something very showy, but which will appear to others more ridiculous than elegant.

The line of beauty in these, as in the preceding alphabets, is the most important, as well as the most difficult part of the capitals, and will require much practice. The student should devote at least half an hour a day to making this stroke alone, until he can make it well.



***THE "ITALIAN" CAPITALS (See the Second Alphabet on Plate 6),***

Are also made with a motion of the whole arm, but the pen is held much as it would be for ruling, the first and second fingers being under the holder of the pen, with the thumb on top and at right angles with it. This position of the pen is necessary, in order to make those strokes shaded, which in ordinary capitals are light, and *vice versa*. The transposition of the light and heavy strokes is the characteristic difference in the two alphabets. The holder should point in a direction corresponding nearly to the slope of the writing, and as upright as may be without catching the points in the paper. If the pen lies too flat, there will not be sufficient contrast between the light and heavy strokes. This alphabet may be practised for amusement, or for ornamental purposes, and the letters may be made passably well, with much less practice than is required for the common flourished capitals, but they are not popular with men of business, and always suggest an unnatural "straining after effect," on the part of the writer.

***COARSE HAND (Plate 7),***

Examples of which are given in Plate 7, in order to be well written, requires much care and practice, on the part of the learner, but the time devoted to this kind of writing is always well spent, as it is of much practical use when once learned, and the training to which the fingers are subjected in making the letters, serves to give more complete control of the pen, and imparts certainty, strength, and character to the writer's cursive hand.

The capitals may be flourished like those on Plate 6, as they cannot be made very large, and at the same time very well, with a motion of the fingers alone.

Plate 6 may also be referred to for such of the capitals as are not found on Plate 7, as no variation in their shape is required for coarse hand. The small letters, however, must be made with much more fulness in the turns, and must occupy much less space horizontally, when compared with the height, than they do in running or current hand. All the small letters of the coarse-hand alphabet, with the necessary spaces between



them, should be written within a distance of thirty-two squares, one side of each square being the height of the small a, while the current-hand alphabet looks crowded if it occupies a space of less than sixty-four squares measured in the same manner.

In making the small letters, the fingers must perform all the work, the pen must be held with quite a firm grasp, and the strokes must be drawn with a slow, steady, and uniform motion.

All the letters or parts of letters, which commence with a square top, of which the i is a good illustration, must be made by pressing the pen hard enough upon the paper to open the points before any downward motion is permitted, and the mark being once started, the same width must be carefully preserved as far as the beginning of the curve, when the thickness must gradually diminish until the stroke becomes a hair-line. So also in all lines which terminate in a square end at the bottom, the pen must come to a complete stop before the fingers are allowed to relax their pressure in the least.

The letters must be kept precisely of the same height, which can be done by ruling parallel lines the desired distance apart, the strokes must be of a uniform thickness without any variation in the slope, and without the least roughness on the edges, and all the connecting curves must be formed with the greatest regularity. And finally, the spacing, the thing indispensable to good coarse-hand writing, and the last which the learner will acquire to perfection, cannot be too carefully attended to.

The same letter must occupy the same space, and the distances between the letters must be uniform. When the student has written a page of coarse hand he can determine, by a careful examination of the letters, whether all the above conditions have been complied with, and if not, his writing will be open to criticism, and he should try again, being careful to avoid in the next attempt any errors which he has discovered in the last, until the imperfections all disappear. The pen most suitable to be used must not be so coarse as to make a large hair-line, but it should be quite large in order to hold a good supply of ink, very elastic at the points, and sufficiently strong to admit of being pressed with considerable force upon the paper without breaking.



*ITALIC OR SCRIPT HAND (Plate 8),*

Is especially useful, when much matter is required to be written in a small space, and when it is desirable to have the writing executed with the greatest distinctness.

The directions for writing coarse hand are equally applicable to this, except that the capitals in script hand are not to be flourished, but must be made as free from all embellishment as possible. Any marks, either in the large or small letters, which are not really essential to give them their proper forms, only detract from their beauty, and deprive the writing of its chief merit, which is clearness.

Unless the writing is to be quite small, lines should be ruled for the height, both of the small letters and capitals, the best proportion for the relative size of the letters being three spaces for the small, and five for the large ones.

The letters must touch the ruling with the greatest exactness, both at the top and bottom, and if more than one line of the same size is to be written, complete uniformity in the ruling must be observed, by carefully measuring the distance between the lines, either with the dividers or otherwise. The horizontal hair-lines in the capitals must be made with a fine pen and a ruler. In no other way can they be made to look so well, and but little extra time will be required to finish the capitals in this manner, if all in the line or on the page are left to be ruled at one time. If the letters are faultless in form, but spread too far apart, or irregularly spaced, the good effect is destroyed; hence it is important that they should be carefully and compactly arranged.

Simplicity, compactness, and regularity are the essential qualities in good script writing.

*OLD ENGLISH TEXT (Plate 9),*

As an ornamental hand, combines the two desirable qualities of beauty and simplicity, to a greater degree than any alphabet yet devised.

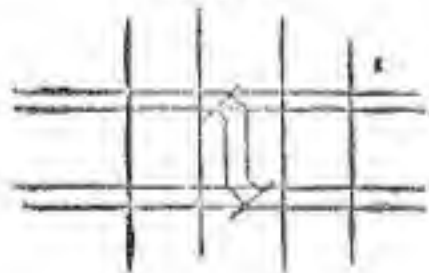


It will however admit of ornamentation to any desired extent, and thus may be made to gratify the taste of such as are best pleased with letters of a showy character, or it may be so severely plain as to entirely satisfy those who consider beauty to be "the absence of all superfluity."

It can be executed with so much care that hours may be devoted to a single line, or it may be written at a single stroke of the pen, and with a rapidity almost equal to coarse hand. Another important consideration is, that it may be written tolerably well with even moderate practice, by any one who has a fair ability to imitate. It is by no means necessary that a person should be able to write a finished current hand, in order to acquire proficiency in ornamental penmanship. Any one who has sufficient artistic skill to draw a good representation of a finger-post may, with an hour's practice, learn to make any single Old English lower-case letter tolerably well, while the same person might find it necessary to practice for weeks, and even months, in order to write the small current-hand letters with any degree of proficiency.

Ornamental letters are generally made with the aid of a ruler, dividers, and other drafting instruments, and often at the expense of much labored outlining and careful spacing, while the current-hand penman can rely upon no other aid except what his own good taste and a thoroughly trained hand may afford.

No. 1.

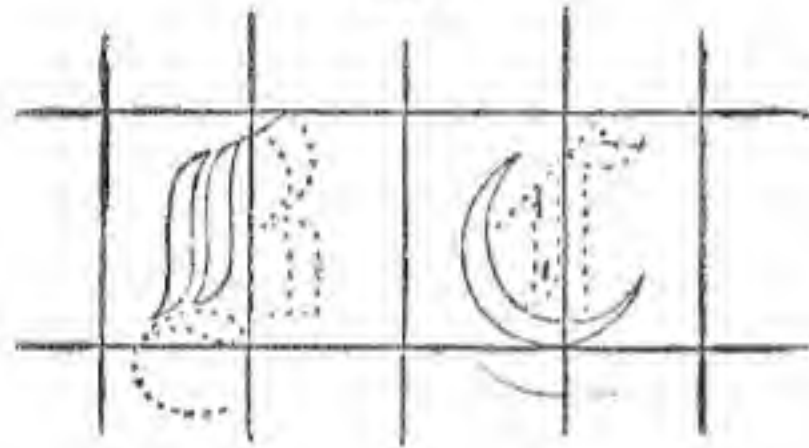


The learner should first draw four horizontal parallel lines with a fine-pointed pencil, at about the same relative distance apart, as those in Cut No. 1, and across these, perpendicular lines must be ruled at any convenient distance, the object of these last being to assist in making the letters upright. Beginners almost invariably slope the letters as they have been accustomed to do in their ordinary writing, and will generally continue to do so for some time, even with the perpendicular lines to guide them. After the ruling has been properly prepared, the student should make the outlines of the character given in Cut No. 1, and continue to practice on it until he can make it well, as this, with a few modifications, occurs in nearly all the small letters, and of itself forms the principal part of many of them, as may be seen by reference to the plate. After this character can be drawn



accurately, the rest of the small letters may be made, beginning with a, and practising on each one by itself, until it can be well formed before taking another, and making them all in outline with a pencil. The alphabet must be repeated until the student becomes so thoroughly familiar with the form of all the letters that he is not obliged to refer to the copy, otherwise he will make no more progress with this than he would with the ordinary written alphabet, if he was obliged to have constant reference to the original written or printed copy before he could form a letter.

No. 2.



For the capitals, two horizontal ruled lines (with perpendicular lines as before referred to), are sufficient. The two characters which form the principal part of most of the capitals, are given in Cut No. 2, and will require more practice than all the alphabet besides. All the other parts of the capitals are comparatively simple, and can be made with ease after these have been thoroughly learned. The universal error, with beginners, is to make the lines in the first character too crooked, as any one may see by comparing his work with the copy. By reference to the plate, it will be noticed that this stroke for the greater part of its length is straight, the ends only being slightly curved, as they are brought to a point. The S is the only exception to this rule, and in this letter the main strokes are very much bent. The second character in Cut No. 2, and which forms the principal part of the C, G, and T, is much more difficult to make, properly, than the one just noticed. The curve gradually becomes more abrupt towards the lower part, and cannot therefore be made with the dividers, and the student must rely almost wholly upon practice and his imitative ability to give it the proper shape.

Some help may be obtained by placing over the copy a thin piece of paper, sufficiently transparent to show the lines through it, and tracing them until a good idea of their shape is acquired. After these two principal parts of the alphabet have been thoroughly learned, the student may commence with the A and make



all the capital letters, simply outlining them and repeating the process, until they can all be tolerably well formed without a copy, after which he will make more rapid progress towards perfection.

After a set of both capitals and small letters can be clearly and neatly outlined with a pencil, smooth and delicate lines should be drawn over the pencilled letters with pen and ink, care being taken to avoid any inaccuracies which may be noticed in the original sketch. A ruler may be used to advantage in much of this part of the work. When the ink is thoroughly dry, the pencil-marks must be erased with rubber, and a clear, handsome outline will remain, and may be ornamented or made into plain black letters, according to the taste of the penman. In filling up the letters, a smooth-pointed and not very fine pen should be used, and the work must be done with as few touches of the pen as possible, so as not to break the surface of the paper. Wherever angles occur, they must be made sharp and clear, the edges of letters must be free from all roughness and irregularity, and where a letter or part of a letter ends in a point, the termination must have a sharp, decided finish. After the student has learned to outline the letters correctly, he can practice making them with one stroke of the pen, and if the writing is small, it should always be done in this manner, which will give it a freer and more practised appearance. It will not be easy at first to draw all the downward strokes perpendicularly, and parallel to each other, to place them the proper distance apart, and to have them all exactly of the same thickness, but moderate perseverance will enable the student to overcome all serious imperfections. The pen must be held a little more upright than for ordinary writing, and such a one must be selected, as will make the marks sufficiently broad and smooth on the edges, so as to avoid retouching.

#### *GERMAN TEXT (Plate 10),*

May be written with but little difficulty, after Old English has been properly learned. There is much similarity in the form of the small letters in both alphabets, the distinction in the two being, that the German Text letters are characterized by a curved outline and a tapering finish, while in Old English the outlines are princi-



pally straight, and the terminations as square as they can be made. This difference will be apparent upon comparing the two alphabets, letter by letter, yet the variation is so trifling, that, but a few hours' practice will be required to write German Text small letters well, after mastering the Old English; and as the directions for the latter are equally applicable to both, they need not be repeated.

The capitals of the two alphabets have but few features common to both, yet practice on either is certainly a help towards the more ready execution of the other. German Text capitals, when properly formed, consist almost wholly of various combinations of Hogarth's Line of Beauty, some of the letters being made up entirely of that character, see L, P, and Z, for example, while not one except the S is formed without it.

This character is thoroughly represented in the letters L and M, and is of so much importance in the formation of the capitals, that the student must practice upon it until he can form it perfectly. Graceful curves and slender fine-pointed terminations are the objects to be aimed at, and are of much more importance than to follow precisely the same combinations of the line of beauty that are given in the copy,—for example: the A, B, M, N, P, R, U, V, W, and Y, may all commence, and often do, with the same character which forms the first part of the A in the plate, or the first part of the B may be used for the first part of all the others just named. In this and other similar respects, German Text alphabets sometimes differ, and although all have the same general character, yet it may be left to the good taste of the penman to adopt the particular style which is most pleasing to himself. The graceful strokes which form the German Text letters seem to call for tasteful and appropriate flourishes, and they impart so much additional beauty to the general appearance of the writing, that to omit them deprives this hand of much of its pleasing effect.

The flourishes should be made with a single stroke, and with the pen held in the usual manner, or in that prescribed for Italian capitals (see p. 22), as the shape of the flourishes or their position may require. The flourishing must bear some resemblance in the general direction of the strokes to the particular letter it is intended to ornament, so that it may serve to some extent as an elaboration of the letter itself. Lines slightly



Entered according to act of Congress, in the year 1864,  
BY GEORGE N. COMER,  
in the Clerk's office of the District Court of the District of Massachusetts.



curved are to be avoided, as those only are ornamental which have a decided sweep throughout their entire length; and care must be taken not to give the flourishes too much prominence, either by making them too large or putting on too many of them.

### *ORNAMENTAL PENMANSHIP*

Does not depend entirely upon perfection, in the shape and execution of the letters for its pleasing effect, but much upon the tasteful arrangement of the words, and lines of which the work is composed. The penman must possess something of a natural faculty for this part of the business, or his productions will never be wholly satisfactory, even after having the benefit of the most careful instruction.

Although much depends upon the good judgment of the writer himself, a few general hints may be given for the guidance of those who have devoted but little attention to this branch of the subject.

The work to be truly ornamental, should not be made up principally of one kind of letters, but it should be a composition of various hands, and variously ornamented letters of the same hand; neither should all the light, or all the heavy letters come in one part of the piece, but they must be so distributed as to give a pleasing effect to the whole. Care should be taken to give prominence to the most important words, and to those alone. Little would be thought of the taste or good judgment of a printer who should set up the most unimportant words on a page in large capitals, merely for the sake of variety, or for the purpose of filling up spaces, which would otherwise be unoccupied; yet this same kind of inconsistency is too often apparent, even in the work of those who claim great proficiency in ornamental penmanship.

Carelessness in arranging the work, so as to give it a one-sided appearance, is a common error. This may be effectually avoided by pencilling out, on another piece of paper, letters of the same kind and size as those which are to be used, and thus finding out beforehand exactly the space they will occupy, after which they can be readily placed in the desired position. It is necessary that lines intended to be horizontal, or parallel, should



be *strictly* so. The importance of this is so apparent, that the suggestion may seem to be uncalled for, but important as it is, too little attention is given to it, and the effect of many a piece of penmanship has been spoiled through carelessness in ruling the lines. Parallel rulers are not to be depended upon, unless the lines are few in number and not far apart, and the only sure way to get the lines in every respect exact, is to measure carefully from some suitable point.

A considerable part of the work should consist of curved lines, when they can be introduced to advantage, as too many straight lines always impart to it a stiff and lifeless appearance.

A beginner will invariably soil the sheet he is at work upon, either with perspiration from the hands, by blotting, or by repeatedly pencilling the letters, and afterwards trying to erase them with rubber.

There is not the least excuse for this, even from those who are habitually untidy. If a sheet of paper, sufficiently large, is placed over the one to be written upon, and a small opening cut in it, so as to show only one line at a time, it will be a good protection against accident or carelessness, and all experimental outlining should be done on another sheet.

Suggestions enough have already been given to show that PAINSTAKING, aided by some natural talent, comprises the substance of all that can be said upon this subject, and as soon as the student has fully learned what is implied by "taking pains," and has advanced so far that he becomes interested to discover and correct faults which may not be apparent to him at the first glance, and which though trifling in themselves, serve in the aggregate to make the writing imperfect and unsatisfactory, then he will be in a position to make real progress; and what has heretofore been a dull task will begin to be a pleasant recreation, his love for the subject will increase with the improvement he makes, until with scarcely more effort than is required for ordinary writing, he finds himself able to execute his work with taste and skill.



# COMER'S COMMERCIAL COLLEGE,

*Granite Building, Corner of Washington and School Streets, Boston, Mass.*

---

FOUNDED BY GEORGE N. COMER, A. D. 1840.

---

This institution having been for *twenty-four years* past (1864) under the *same management*, and attended by *twelve thousand students*, possesses peculiar facilities for procuring suitable employment for its graduates, one or more of whom will be found in almost every mercantile house in Boston, while others are occupying places of honor and profit in the army, navy, merchant, and civil service all over the world.

**BOOK-KEEPING**, as practised in the best mercantile houses of this and other countries. Personal, Partnership, Commission, Corporate, Railroad, Shipping, Manufacturing, and

**BANKING**. A model bank is in daily operation, in which deposits are made, checks paid, notes and drafts discounted, exchange bought and sold, and the general business of banking thoroughly carried out.


**NAVIGATION** is taught by all the best modern methods. **SEXTANTS, QUADRANTS, CHRONOMETERS, AZIMUTH COMPASSES, CHARTS, &c.**, provided and explained.

REAR-ADMIRAL DAVIS, Chief of the Bureau of Navigation, Navy Department, Washington, in his letter says:—

"I know of no institution in the country where a seaman can revive, correct, or enlarge his knowledge of navigation, strictly speaking, or where a young beginner can acquire the first rudiments of the science, and the manipulation of the instruments commonly used in its application, so quickly, concisely, and thoroughly, as in COMER'S COMMERCIAL COLLEGE, BOSTON."

**TELEGRAPHY**. Complete sets of the most perfect APPARATUS, under the charge of experienced practical operators, who give instruction both by sound and writing, so as to enable the graduate to command immediate employment. The increased demand for efficient telegraphic operators for the army and throughout the country renders this a desirable means of livelihood for many (of both sexes) who can not attend to more laborious occupations.

**Engineering, Surveying, Languages, &c.**, efficiently taught.

 **CATALOGUES**, with styles of **HANDWRITING** taught, **TERMS, RULES, etc.**, sent, postpaid, to any address, or may be had *free* at the College office, No. 139 WASHINGTON STREET, BOSTON, MASS. *Entrance to the Ladies' Department, No. 6 School Street.*

**GEORGE N. COMER, A.M., President.**

**OLIVER E. LINTON, Secretary.**





IMPORTANT TO THE SAILOR.

PRICE 75 CENTS.

# COMER'S MANUAL OF PRACTICAL NAVIGATION,

DESIGNED TO FACILITATE SUCH PORTIONS OF

BOWDITCH'S NAVIGATOR

as are most needed in actual practice at sea; with copious examples, illustrating the use of the AMERICAN EPHEMERIS and NAUTICAL ALMANAC for the years 1864, 1865, and 1866. For six years past the previous editions of this work have given perfect satisfaction. It is extensively used in the navy, and is recommended by the Chief of the Bureau of Navigation at Washington.

No 1. LARGE.



For Directing and Bold Rapid Writing.

No. 2. MEDIUM.



For Correspondence and General Purposes.

No. 3. MEDIUM



For Correspondence and General Purposes.

No. 4. FINE.



For Posting Fine Work, Ladies' use, &c.

A GOOD PEN IS A GOOD THING.

## THE BOOK-KEEPER'S PEN.

These Pens have been before the public for ten years, and have given perfect satisfaction to all who have used them. One evidence of their popularity is, that they have been extensively counterfeited; and, like all counterfeits, being poor and cheap articles, have misled many purchasers. The genuine Pens are their own recommendation. Almost every hand may be suited out of the four numbers. The trade supplied on liberal terms.

"COMER'S STEEL PENS. — The best we ever wrote with." — *Congregationalist*.

"COMER'S STEEL PENS, like his works on Book-keeping and Penmanship, are all first-rate." — *Zion's Herald*.

"These pens are admirably adapted for the purpose for which they are designed, and will be highly prized by those who have much writing to do." — *Christian Witness*.

"The pen we are now writing with, G. N. Comer's Own, glides over the paper like a charm." — *Watchman and Reflector*.



**BOOK-KEEPING RATIONALIZED**  
AND  
**BOOK-KEEPING WITHOUT THE JOURNAL COMBINED.**  
**FORTIETH THOUSAND.**

*PRICE \$1.25.*

Adapted to all kinds of business, — Personal and Partnership, Commission and Corporate, — with entirely new and rapid methods of computing Interest, Exchange, Averaging Accounts, etc.; a copious APPENDIX, and a Fac-simile of the written pages of the day, Cash, Ledger, Set of Exchange, Notes, Drafts, etc. By


**GEORGE N. COMER, A. M.,**  
**ACCOUNTANT,**

Author of "Double Entry Book-keeping without the Journal," &c.; founder, and for twenty-three years Senior Principal of Comer's Commercial College, Boston.

*\*\* The very great success of his previous efforts has induced Mr. Comer to prepare a work which shall not only meet the wants of school-teachers and students, but also be a reliable book of reference for book-keepers and clerks.*

**RULED BLANKS**

For the above Day, Cash, and Ledger, with printed Index and Trial Balances.

 A liberal allowance to Teachers and the Trade. Copies sent for examination on receipt of price.



## TESTIMONIALS.

As a large volume might be filled with commendatory notices of the press, a few only are selected to show the favor with which this work has been received.

The editor of the *Massachusetts Teacher* says, "We have examined this book very carefully, and with great satisfaction. It is *clear, comprehensive, and concise* — just such a book as will meet the wants of students and accountants."

"As a book of reference, it is a work of rare value, and every accountant and every student should possess it." — *Traveller*.

"An examination of its pages show that the author is thoroughly at home on his 'speciality,' and that simplicity has been the object chiefly aimed at. All unnecessary technicalities in the phraseology and complexity in the system of keeping accounts have been studiously avoided; all *rules* have been dispensed with, and, in their place, *reasons* have been given for every transaction." — *Transcript*.

"Mr. Comer is competent to produce as good a work on this subject as can be made. We believe that, as a text-book on book-keeping, this treatise is entirely worthy of confidence. A shrewd, studious young man could acquire a good knowledge of book-keeping from this book without a teacher. It is simple, and yet embraces the whole subject." — *Zion's Herald*.

"It is certainly the best and most common-sense treatise on the subject we have ever seen." — *Post*.

"The long experience and acknowledged ability of the author of this little treatise are guarantees sufficient, in this community, of its excellence. The title gives a full idea of its contents, which are methodically arranged; and we think no work has been issued upon the subject which so well unites the qualities of *clearness and simplicity with comprehensiveness*." — *Courier*.

"The volume before us is the result of the author's experience as a scientific, as well as a practical, accountant. The changes which have been made in the art of keeping books have been so numerous and radical that a new treatise cannot be out of place; and Mr. Comer's work is very clear and explicit in its explanations, as well as very full in its exemplification of the new methods of keeping accounts, casting interest and discount, averaging accounts, and other topics of interest to the mercantile community." — *Congregationalist*.

"It is book-keeping made sensible. In this volume we have a perfect idea of the art of recording, in a correct and legible manner, the transactions of business. Book-keeping has been a mystery. Not one merchant in ten can understand how his high-priced accountant keeps his books; and it has been reserved for Mr. Comer to offer to the public a volume which makes book-keeping intelligible to any one who will devote a little attention to the subject." — *Evening Gazette*.

"This little volume contains more in its closely-printed pages than many a more pretentious work. From the long experience and established reputation of the author, we should expect, just what we have, a thorough analytical explanation of the various operations in book-keeping, which seem so complicated and abstruse to the tyro, but which, under Mr. Comer's clear statements, are brought into simple order and harmony." — *New England Farmer*.

"Nothing necessary to a perfect system seems to be omitted, and nothing unnecessary and onerous introduced. It bears the mark of an intelligent and accurate mind, and is well worthy the attention of all whose business requires them to attend to the financial details of trade." — *Daily Advertiser*.

"We have examined it thoroughly, and express our opinion that it is a work of much value." — *Boston Recorder*.

"This work, the fruit of years of observation and experience, does much to simplify the study of book-keeping, and to familiarize the student with its leading principles. Mr. Comer shows the applicability of double-entry book-keeping to all kinds of business, and by a succession of examples aptly illustrates the mode of keeping accounts in the Day Book, Cash Book, and Ledger, as well as the form of keeping Invoice, Check, and Sales Books, Journal, &c. Appended are a variety of valuable treatises and tables relating to commercial computations, interest, exchange, &c. Mr. Comer has admirably succeeded in 'rationalizing' book-keeping, and has prepared a work which is scarcely less valuable to the accountant than to the student." — *Journal*.

"The book is superbly printed, and contains much valuable information on the subject to which it is devoted, — every imaginable form of business document, — all spread out before the reader in a plain, practical, business-like style." — *Danville, Vt., North Star*.

"The object of this book, as its title indicates, is to familiarize the art of book-keeping; and it is admirably arranged for that purpose. The distinguished reputation of its author, together with its intrinsic merits, will, undoubtedly, secure for it a large sale." — *Lynn Bay State*.

"It is an admirable manual, teaching the *why* of things, as well as the *how*. It may be commended as an invaluable aid to the accountant." — *Lowell Courier*.

"We should judge it to be decidedly the most perfect book of its kind yet published, and one which should be in the possession of every one, especially those just commencing the study of book-keeping." — *Barnstable Patriot*.



\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

[illegible]

24

*Handwritten cursive practice line with a wavy line and a series of 'e' characters.*

<sup>7</sup> rrrrrrrrrrrr <sup>s</sup> ssssssssssss <sup>t</sup> tttttttttttt

<sup>10</sup> a a a a a a a <sup>11</sup> d d d d d d d d <sup>12</sup> x x x x x x x x

<sup>10</sup> kkkkkkkkkk<sup>m</sup> llllllll<sup>n</sup> kkkkkkkkkk<sup>s</sup>

*Handwritten practice script:*

16 *no no no no* 17 *ky ky ky ky* 18 *era era era*



<sup>19</sup> b b b b b b b b <sup>20</sup> h y h y h y h y <sup>21</sup> l s l s l s l s l s <sup>2</sup>

<sup>22</sup> t h t h t h t h <sup>23</sup> s m s m s m s m <sup>24</sup> g h g h g h g h

<sup>25</sup> m l p m l p m l p <sup>26</sup> c h c h c h c h <sup>27</sup> o f o f o f o f o f o f

<sup>28</sup> h n g h n g h n g <sup>29</sup> d g d g d g d g <sup>30</sup> h f s h f s h f s h

<sup>31</sup> t h y t h y t h y <sup>32</sup> y l l y l l y l l y <sup>33</sup> q z q z q z q z q z

<sup>34</sup> s s s s s s s s <sup>35</sup> g f g f g f g f g f <sup>36</sup> k g k g k g k g k g



adamant brightness consume demands, employed.

fragments granary honorable imposing justified

knights luminous musically nameless opinions

prudence quarterly residence sincerity triumph

usurious volumes wanderer xanthine yeomanry

rodiaent abedefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz, loosely



Amplitude. A. Warrington. B. Compliment. C.

Department. D. Entertaining. E. Framingham. F.

Gymnasium. G. Harmonious. H. Institutions. I.

Jamestown. J. Knighthood. K. Lithographs. L.

Mississippi. M. Netherlands. N. Ornithologist. O.

Philosopher. P. Quarrelsome. Q. Remainder. R.



## GENERAL REMARKS.

---

DURING twenty-three years past, the authors of this work have had under their instruction, with a view to preparation for mercantile pursuits, a yearly average number of five hundred students, a fact which all will admit must be productive of so much valuable experience in teaching, that indecision, guess-work, or doubtful theories in regard to the most practical method must, from the nature of the circumstances, be forced to give way to that which is positive and reliable.

This experience has been attended with the unusual advantage of giving to each person separate instruction, thereby affording an opportunity of observing the general state of proficiency in handwriting, of finding out the obstacles each individual has to overcome, of watching his progress from day to day, and carefully noting the effects which invariably follow any prescribed course of study.

The result of our observations may be briefly summed up as follows:—

### *OF THE AVERAGE PROFICIENCY IN WRITING.*

The prevalence of really poor penmanship is remarkable. No one thing is more constantly forced upon our attention than this, and of hundreds of samples now before us, written previously to coming under our instruction, the writing of more than three-fourths is so indifferent, that it would effectually debar the writers from any position of responsibility. Any document of importance copied, or account rendered, in such a hand, would be intolerable, while letters, either of friendship or business, no better written, would be discreditable in



Sumptuous S. Temperature T. Unkindness U<sup>5</sup>

Voluminous V. Washington W. Typography H.

Youthfully Y. Zanguebar Z. Zimmerman Z.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O

P Q R S T U V W X Y Z. 1<sup>st</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> 4<sup>th</sup> 5<sup>th</sup> 6<sup>th</sup> 7<sup>th</sup> 8<sup>th</sup> 9<sup>th</sup> 10<sup>th</sup>

1234567890 # # & L. Co. 1234567890



A B C D E F G H I J K L

M N O P Q R S T U V W

X Y Z &c.

A B C D E F G H I J K L

M N O P Q R S T U V W

X Y Z &c.



Ledger Headings.

Dr. R. & S. C. Parkinson & Co. Cr.

Cash. Merchandise. City Bank.

Nickerson & Co. Thompson Bros.

Dr. Real Estate at Chelsea. Cr.



*A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U*

*V W X a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z. Y Z &.*

*Bennington. Dr. Commission Cr. Exchange Bank.*

*Discount. Merchandise. Bills Receivable. Guaranty.*

*Messrs. Cunningham & Co. Philadelphia. Express.*

*Comer's Commercial College, Boston. 1234567890.*



Old English.

ab c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r

A B C D E F G H I

J K L M N O P Q R S T

U V W X Y Z. &c.

st u v w x y z . 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 .

Comer's Commercial College, Boston.



46  
GERMAN TEXT.

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n

o p q r s t u v w x y z

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

op q r s t u v w x y z

etc.



*abcdefghijklm*

***A B C D E F G H I***

***J K L M N O P Q R***

***S T U V W X Y Z***

*n o p q r s t u v w x y z*

*&c.*



a b c d e f g h i j k l m n

A B C D E F G H I

J K L M N O P Q R

S T U V W X Y Z

o p q r f s t u v w x y z

&c.



the extreme. All who admit the importance of a good handwriting will also admit that this general state of backwardness is deplorable; and the same ignorance in any other fundamental branch of education would be considered little less than disgraceful. The time has certainly passed by when, as some contend, it was considered plebeian to write handsomely, and now it is thought quite as important that one's written ideas should show a legible and pleasing appearance, upon presenting themselves to a friend or correspondent, as it is that the writer himself, under like circumstances, should be decently and becomingly clothed.

This general and lamentable deficiency is easily accounted for, and is mainly owing to the fact that, in our schools, both public and private, writing, instead of being treated as a branch of study of the first importance, is looked upon as a secondary matter, and undeserving of any very special attention. If, instead of the too common practice of introducing studies comparatively useless, and so burdening the mind of youth by obliging them to learn by rote what their immature minds cannot practically comprehend, a part of this wasted time could be devoted to improving the handwriting, giving it the same amount of energy and application that is given to reading, grammar, or arithmetic, the result, under equally judicious training, would be vastly different, and upon leaving school, the pupil's progress would be found to have kept more even pace with his other important studies.

Again, the present is emphatically an age of books; everybody reads more or less, daily; hence it is difficult to find any one not tolerably adept in this branch. Seeing the same words repeatedly, familiarizes us with their orthography, and he must be dull indeed who, from constantly reading grammatical sentences, does not acquire something of a practical-knowledge of syntax. Thus, while one may be really attending to grammar, reading, and spelling for a week's time in the aggregate, he may not have written an hour, and most likely not at all. Writing needs much more practice to make one really proficient than any of the primary studies, and as it almost universally receives less, what other result could be expected than the unsatisfactory one we witness in the autography of hundreds of different manuscripts?



The evil arising from this general and culpable neglect is only enhanced by the efforts of incompetent persons, who attempt to instruct others in that of which they know comparatively nothing themselves. A teacher should not only be able to form letters properly himself, but he should thoroughly understand all the principles upon which their mechanical execution depends; and in addition to this he must have the experience necessary to enable him to see, at a glance, what are the hindrances to the student's progress, and to suggest the readiest way to overcome them. Without these qualifications in the teacher, the pupil's time is worse than wasted. We consider the two causes referred to, namely, general neglect on the part of the pupil, and worthless instruction, to be the fruitful source of so much bad penmanship.

### *OBJECTS TO BE ATTAINED AND DIFFICULTIES TO BE OVERCOME.*

So far as one's handwriting is to be practically applied to business, facility in the execution must certainly take precedence of everything but legibility. It can be of very little advantage to any one to be able to form a single letter or a few words elegantly, if, as soon as he is forced to write with any rapidity, his penmanship becomes an illegible scrawl; but this is the inevitable result with those who start with the false impression that the form of the letters is of more importance than the ready execution of them, and go on wasting time without a thought of anything beyond making a good imitation of the copy. All such persons are sure to meet with great disappointment the moment they are obliged to desert their labored and plodding course for the active necessities of business.

It seems singular, but it is very true, that in almost any other mechanical operation where skilful manipulation is required, the hand and arm, though they may be rigid and unwieldy at first, gradually accommodate themselves to the most convenient position for executing the desired work with the greatest facility, while in



writing, the awkward beginner writes awkwardly for a lifetime, and his false positions are never changed for true ones, unless he is directed by some one who can give him the aid he requires. Elegance in the form, symmetry in the proportion, and uniformity in the size, slope, and spacing of the letters, are all essential to a faultless handwriting, but no one can be considered a thorough penman unless, in addition to all these requisites, he possesses complete command of the pen and the power to execute unhesitatingly and with the most perfect freedom. To attain this end persistent energy, patient practice, and most careful attention to elementary principles, are all indispensable.

It is a mistake to suppose that one can take a copy, without regard either to its adaptedness to his case, or to the position of his hand or pen or manner of doing his work, and by mere force of practice, in some haphazard way, sooner or later acquire a good hand. The pupil must take it for granted that an acquisition so valuable cannot be had at a trifling sacrifice of labor. But practice, indispensable as it is, is worse than nothing if it be of the wrong kind; and for this reason he should be exceedingly careful to get properly started, so that instead of having to go back at a future time to correct and unlearn erroneous habits, every hour's practice should tend to establish good ones, and to show such encouraging progress as will induce him to follow up every advantage already gained. He must endeavor to acquire such a love for the study as will induce him to practice for the pleasure it affords him, and the certainty he feels that he is acquiring information really valuable. He must not be easily discouraged. It would be very strange if his advancement should keep pace with his desire to improve. He may even wish to transform a bad handwriting into a good one in a dozen or twenty easy lessons of an hour each, *but it cannot be done*. There is no such short road to be taken, although every properly directed effort is sure to be amply rewarded.

And here it may be proper to notice, that the personal superintendence of a competent instructor can never be fully supplied by a written treatise. Practical suggestions, with carefully prepared copies, and diagrams, though they afford most valuable assistance to an earnest intelligent student, are only the agencies



which it is a teacher's duty to have actively and constantly at work. Important hints may be printed for the student's benefit, yet he may not think of them after reading them once, but a teacher who realizes their value will reiterate them day after day, until the pupil is made to perceive that there are many things *to be learned*, and that he must pay attention to them, or else make no progress. Some are so deficient in their natural capacity for this particular study that they can see no choice between a good letter and a poor one. Their own handwriting seems as good as a better one, and in some respects may be even preferable. The *taste* of such persons must be cultivated; and although this seems, in many cases, a hopeless task, yet those who are so unfortunate as to need such assistance can get it much more readily from a teacher than from books. Again, a student may be ever so anxious and willing to learn, and may possess the essential qualities of perseverance and ability to a satisfactory degree, and yet be in doubt in regard to many things which a teacher should be able to decide for him at once. Still there are many who, either from want of time or means, cannot place themselves under the direction of an instructor, and for the benefit of such, this book has been prepared. The design has been to make the exercises attractive and practical, and to give them as little the character of a task as possible, so that the practice of them may serve to pass a leisure hour or a winter's evening pleasantly as well as profitably. Useless details which tend only to perplex the learner, without effecting practical results, have been carefully avoided, while nothing has been intentionally omitted which could be of any essential benefit. If the learner will bring to bear the same energy and common sense which he would exercise in the prosecution of any other undertaking, and will follow the directions here given for his guidance with the same determination that he would bestow upon any other subject equally important, he may be assured that the time he devotes to it will be profitably expended, and although the aid of an instructor might be of incalculable advantage towards hastening the result, yet he will not fail in the end to become a tolerably expert and accomplished penman.

From long experience, we recommend the use of ordinary-sized letter-paper, in sheets, for writing the exer-



cises upon, in preference to copy-books, both for schools and self-instruction. It gets the student in the habit of writing on the same material that he will be called upon to practice hereafter, and does not discourage him by having a bad, blotted, or imperfect page, bound up with his better samples, while the teacher may retain a sheet at any time at pleasure, showing the progress of the pupil. A neat, cheap portfolio, might be provided for schools.

COMER'S COMMERCIAL COLLEGE.

Boston, October, 1864.